

## **Chapter 5      Coordination with Local Mitigation Planning Efforts**

### **Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000**

*§201.4(c)(4) A section on the Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning that includes the following:*

- (i) A description of the State process to support, through funding and technical assistance, the development of local mitigation plans;*
- (ii) A description of the State process and timeframe by which the local plans will be reviewed, coordinated, and linked to the State Mitigation Plan; and*
- (iii) Criteria for prioritizing communities and local jurisdictions that would receive planning and project grants under available funding programs, which should include consideration for communities with the highest risks, repetitive loss properties, and most intense development pressures. Further, that for non-planning grants, a principal criterion for prioritizing grants shall be the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost benefit review of proposed projects and their associated costs.*

### **5.1      Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Development**

To support the development of local hazard mitigation plans, the Department of Emergency Management provided assistance to local and regional jurisdictions through several mediums once interim guidance, training materials and pre-disaster mitigation funding for §322 plan development became available during spring, 2002. At that time, Department of Emergency Management staff in partnership with the Department of Conservation & Recreation's Floodplain Management Program and FEMA began an aggressive campaign to initiate local hazard mitigation planning:

- (1) Staff prioritized local plan development and distributed 2002 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDMP) and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA) funds to six regional planning district commissions that encompassed local governments in southwest Virginia, the Roanoke Valley and the central Shenandoah Valley;
- (2) A workshop to provide multi-jurisdictional instruction on how to conduct the local mitigation planning process was created and delivered in March, 2003;
- (3) Local mitigation planning assistance guidance was developed;
- (4) Direct planning and technical assistance to jurisdictions developing plans was provided; and
- (5) Presentations to state professional organizations at conferences and workshops were given that detailed the requirements of DMA2000 and the Commonwealth's efforts to meet those requirements.

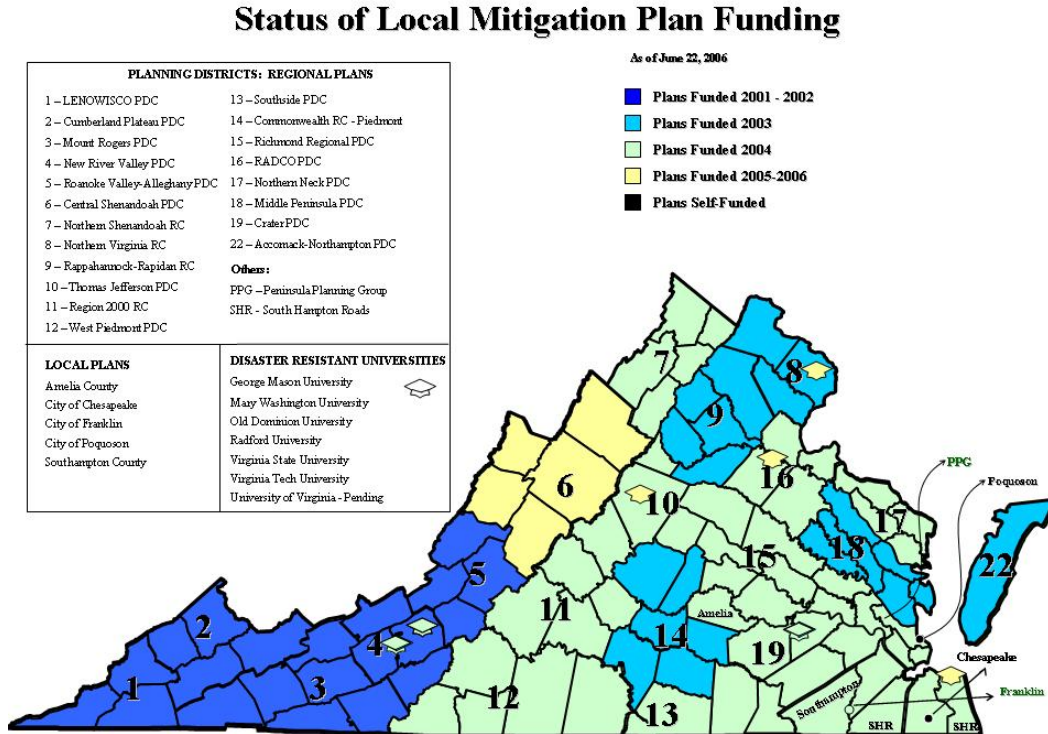
Each of these efforts is described in more detail in the following sections.



### 5.1.1 Distribution of hazard mitigation planning funds

Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of funding for development of local hazard mitigation plans once funds had been distributed and coverage had been provided for the state by spring, 2004.

**Figure 5.1 Status of Local Mitigation Plan Funding**



The Department of Emergency Management originally planned to distribute the limited 2002 PDM \$322 planning funds to regions of the Commonwealth with greater risks of hazard events and/or with dense populations. However, repeated catastrophic flooding in southwest Virginia resulted in three Presidential Disaster Declarations from July 2001 through May 2002. These events elevated the interest of local officials in mitigation. This opportunity led to the funding of initial local plans for the following organizations:

- LENEWISCO Planning District Commission
- Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission
- Mount Rogers Planning District Commission
- New River Planning District Commission
- Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission
- Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
- Town of Bluefield

As funds became available through PDM 2003 and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program priorities for local plan funding were determined by using the following criteria:

**A. Areas with recent disaster events:**

Areas experiencing recent disasters are more likely to be interested in performing the mitigation planning process. Further, funding sometimes is available following a disaster for mitigation planning through HMGP 7% planning monies. When a hazard occurs in an area that currently does not have a mitigation plan, every effort is made to encourage the governing jurisdiction to develop a mitigation plan. When a hazard event occurs in an area that already has or is working on a mitigation plan, any available planning money will be funneled to other areas based on the remaining priorities on this list. Acting on this priority led to funding for the Town of Bluefield and Planning District Commissions (PDCs) 1 through 6 in southwest Virginia following the 2001 and 2002 flood events in those areas.

**B. Regional plans:**

Due to limited funding for mitigation planning, it was determined that the most cost-effective method of mitigation planning fund distribution was through regional planning district commissions. Virginia planning district commissions are recognized, well-organized regional planning agencies that maintain regular interaction with their constituent jurisdictions. Most have staff knowledgeable in planning processes and Geographic Information Systems. They also are knowledgeable about local issues and have capacity to incorporate regional perspective into plans. Since outreach efforts by state mitigation planners began in May 2002, the focus has been to approach regional planning district commissions as primary agencies to coordinate local hazard mitigation plans.

**C. Regions or localities ready to begin their planning efforts:**

By 2003, areas that were ready to take on this planning effort were moved to the top of the state's priority list, though VDEM still emphasized funding regional plans before single jurisdiction plans. This led to VDEM targeting 2003 PDM §322 planning monies to:

- Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission
- Piedmont Planning District Commission
- Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission
- Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission

Each of these regions had expressed an interest in this process and actively developed local political and financial support for a regional planning effort in order to position themselves for funding.

**D. Areas with greater development pressures or density:**

The "Golden Crescent" that runs from Washington, D.C. in the north and swings south through the Richmond metropolitan area, then east to the Hampton Roads metropolitan area is especially vulnerable to hazards such as hurricane, flooding and winter storms due to great population densities. These areas continue to grow rapidly due to development that has placed residences, businesses, critical service facilities and military installations at risk. In addition, the region has major transportation networks, including shipping, and attracts millions of visitors annually.

**E. Areas with greater probability of hazards occurring:**

For initial distribution of planning funds, this assessment was based on past disaster history throughout the Commonwealth and subjective assessments frequency and severity. Once the state and local mitigation plans are completed, this assessment will be refined using the local Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRAs) to provide a more informed assessment of this criterion.



**F. Areas with repetitive losses not covered by other priority considerations:**

Any localities or regions with repetitive loss issues that have not been funded based on the priority considerations listed above would then receive available funding.

**G. Other areas as funding is available:**

The areas that remained to be funded after application of the previous priority considerations were those with the lowest population and development densities and the lowest occurrences of hazard events. Funding was still considered important so that planning efforts could be initiated before the DMA2000 deadline of November 1, 2004.

Following distribution of the 2003 PDM funds, Hurricane Isabel devastated Virginia on September 18, 2003. The 90-day estimate for HMGP funding, along with a commitment from the Commonwealth of Virginia to match HMGP 7% planning monies, allowed the Commonwealth to distribute funds to remaining planning district commissions and regional local coalitions to initiate their §322 plans. Based on the application of these criteria and subsequent distribution of available planning funds from 2001 through 2003, local mitigation plans have been approved or are in development that cover all 324 incorporated Commonwealth cities, counties and towns.

### 5.1.2 Defining the “local planning jurisdictions”

One of the key issues facing the Commonwealth as it started the mitigation planning process was to define “locality” sufficiently to meet current FEMA standards. The definition of a “locality” provided in the DMA2K regulations was written to encompass the broad variety of community types across the U.S. As such, it was much broader than Virginia’s political organization. In order to simplify the planning process as much as possible, the FEMA and Virginia regulatory definitions were researched and a Virginia-specific definition of those “communities” that would be required to take part in the hazard mitigation planning process was developed. The basis of the DMA2000 local government definition is the National Flood Insurance Program definition of a “locality” (Dave Thomas, FEMA Region III, personal communication, July 8, 2003). It was FEMA Region III’s position that the definition of a locality responsible for development of a hazard mitigation plan is:

*Any area or political subdivision within the Commonwealth of Virginia as defined by the Code of Virginia that has authority to create, adopt and/or enforce land use, zoning, or subdivision ordinances and regulations for the areas within its boundaries.*

While the NFIP definition includes Native American tribes and organizations in its description, Virginia does not currently have any federally recognized native organizations or authorized tribal organizations. As a result, those categories were not included in the definition above.

Within the Commonwealth of Virginia, this definition encompasses the counties, cities, and incorporated towns recognized by the *Code of Virginia*. Virginia counties, cities, and incorporated towns have independent land use management authority within their respective boundaries. The Planning District Commissions (PDC) are regional planning organizations that provide technical and planning support to the localities within their respective regions. However, while the PDCs do perform land use planning at the request of their localities, they cannot implement or enforce the plans they create for those localities. Implementation and enforcement remain the responsibility of the cities, counties, and towns for which plans were developed.



The Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes 39 cities, 95 counties, and 190 incorporated towns. There also are 21 planning district commissions in Virginia. A complete list of these localities is provided in Appendix G. Based on the DMA2000 regulations and the “locality” definition provided above, each of Virginia’s cities, counties, and towns are required to develop or take an active role in the development of a hazard mitigation plan for their respective areas. The PDCs are not required to develop a separate hazard mitigation plan for their regions, as they do not have the enforcement authority of the cities, counties, and incorporated towns. However, as described in Section 5.1.1(b), it was the intent of the Commonwealth of Virginia to combine as many of the mitigation plans as possible into regional, multi-jurisdictional plans using the PDCs as the planning agency for these efforts.

### 5.1.3 Local hazard mitigation planning workshops

On March 7, 2003, VDEM presented a one-day hazard mitigation planning workshop in Radford, Virginia, for the Southwest Virginia planning district commissions and the Town of Bluefield that were currently developing mitigation plans. The workshops compressed the FEMA two-day local workshop into a customized Virginia format that could be presented within one-day.

During fall, 2003, the VDEM Training Program presented four additional local mitigation planning workshops using the conventional FEMA materials and a two-day format. These workshops were conducted in Lynchburg, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, and Richmond during late 2003. Planning and emergency management staff attended these workshops, which were conducted following Hurricane Isabel. Similar to the interest in Southwest Virginia following the 2001 and 2002 floods, interest in mitigation planning was high for coastal and urban localities following Hurricane Isabel.

As the remaining communities in the Commonwealth initiated mitigation planning efforts, VDEM and FEMA presented additional planning workshops. The 2004 and 2005 workshops were supported by a Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Program (HMTAP) contract through FEMA Region III. These new sessions were presented in two one-day sessions across the Commonwealth. The first one-day session addressed the beginning of the planning process through the completion of the HIRA. The second one-day session was provided once during fall 2004 and repeated three times in March, 2005 to those localities and planning district commissions with completed HIRAs. The second workshop covered the development of mitigation strategies through plan implementation and adoption.

More recently, VDEM mitigation staff revised and taught the Mitigation Planning for Local Government Workshop Course which was designed for those responsible for developing and/or implementing mitigation projects. The Stafford Act Section 322 requirements were addressed, including the components of All-hazard Mitigation Plan development. Hazard mitigation principles and Virginia mitigation success stories and best practices were also covered in this course. The two two-day courses took place on February 21-22, 2006 in Newport News and on March 7-8, 2006 in Roanoke.

### 5.1.4 Developing local mitigation planning assistance guides

Several training aides have been distributed to those engaged in local mitigation planning:

#### How to Guides

The primary training aide has been the *How to Guide* Series developed by FEMA. These have been critical tools vital to plan development, in particular in hazard identification and





risk assessment. This series has been distributed widely to those engaged in local planning in printed, digital and CD formats.

## Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Library

The *How to Guide* series was included in the *Virginia Hazard Management Library – A Toolbox for Communities* developed as a cooperative project between FEMA, the Department of Emergency Management and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. Multiple natural and human-caused hazards are addressed in the photo and article sections of the library. This CD also provided many mitigation ideas through inclusion of FEMA and state training manuals, technical bulletins, and construction manuals.

## Department of Emergency Management Guidance

Occasional *Answers to Frequently Asked Questions* have been developed to assist those engaged in §322 planning to provide guidance and interpretation of federal DMA 2000 law and interim rules. In addition, VDEM and FEMA staff have provided written and verbal guidance regarding federal code requirements, plan crosswalk reviews, and specifics regarding local plan adoption.

### 5.1.5 Providing technical assistance

Development of local §322 plans is supported by a Planning Coordinator and two planning specialists within the Mitigation Program of the Department of Emergency Management. This support includes:

- Participation in local meetings;
- Availability by phone for consultation, trouble-shooting and technical assistance;
- Development of draft plan outlines for use at local and regional levels;
- Compilation of hazard data at state level where possible for distribution to and use by DRU staff and local plan contacts (for consistency and to kick start the hazard assessment process where possible);
- Provision of local training workshops for local plan Steering Committee members and planning agency and DRU staff;
- Cross-walk review of draft plan sections and final plan prior to submission to FEMA Region III for final approval.
- Provision of support to local jurisdictions and universities during the plan implementation, monitoring, evaluation and update process.

Through the generous Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Program (HMTAP), FEMA Region III supported the Virginia local planning effort through provision of technical assistance, training workshops and cross-walk review as described above. URS Corporation was the lead agency for this assistance, but Dewberry and Greenhorne and O'Meara augmented URS support. This cooperative effort has been and will continue to be essential to the successful completion, approval and adoption of local plans.

### 5.1.6 Meetings and conferences

Once FEMA provided states with guidance and training materials for §322 planning during spring, 2002, VDEM and DCR staff saturated the state with presentations on the



requirements of the Stafford Act, the state's strategy to develop a state plan and the requirements of local plans. These presentations introduced the concepts of multi-hazard planning and emphasized the relevance of pro-active hazard mitigation. Since the Commonwealth had experienced an active cycle of natural disasters and suffered the impacts of September 11, 2001, audiences were extraordinarily receptive to the concept of hazard mitigation planning.

**Table 5.1 Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 Plan Marketing Events**

Date	Organization, Event and Audience
July 18, 2002	The Association of Virginia Planning District Commissions Annual Conference, Virginia Beach, VA. Approximately 70 staff of Virginia's 21 planning district commissions, statewide representation.
August 16, 2002	Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Project Impact All-Hazard Planning and Zoning Workshop, Harrisonburg, VA. Approximately 80 predominantly Shenandoah Valley, Central Piedmont and Northern Virginia local emergency, planning and building officials.
November 21, 2002	Living within Nature; Roanoke Valley Impact Land-use Conference in Roanoke, VA. 250 registered Roanoke Valley, Shenandoah Valley, Virginia and mid-Atlantic local, state and federal government representatives.
January 16, 2003	Virginia Floodplain Managers Association Coastal Floodplain Management Workshop; Williamsburg VA. Sixty-five registered attendees from coastal and central Virginia local governments and consulting firms.
January 23, 2003	Virginia Floodplain Managers Association SW Virginia Floodplain Management Workshop, Abingdon Virginia. Thirty-five representatives from SW VA and New River Valley local governments and consulting firms.
February 20, 2003	Virginia Municipal Government Managers Association Annual Conference, Roanoke VA. One-hour presentation and workshop for 40 county administrators, city managers and town managers. Statewide representation.
March 7, 2003	SW Virginia Mitigation Workshop for Planning District Commissions and Local Governments, Radford, VA. 86 in attendance.
March 24, 2003	Virginia Lakes and Watershed Conference, Virginia Beach VA. Presentation to about 60 local government representatives and consultants. Statewide and mid-Atlantic representation.
June 12, 2003	National All Hazards Mitigation Workshop, EMI Emmitsburg MD; 25 in attendance.
October 2, 2003	Virginia Association of Zoning Officials Annual Conference, Lexington VA. 110 local and regional zoning officials and land-use planning experts in attendance.
October 22, 2003	Virginia Floodplain Managers Association Regional Floodplain Management Workshop in Salem, Virginia. 30 local government officials present.
November 6, 2003	Virginia Floodplain Managers Association Regional Floodplain Management Workshop in Farmville, Virginia. 35 local government officials present.
November 19, 2003	Virginia Floodplain Managers Association Regional Floodplain Management Workshop in Fredericksburg, Virginia. 45 local government officials present.



Date	Organization, Event and Audience
February 11, 2004	Tidewater Chapter, Association of Civil Engineers Annual Workshops, Virginia Beach, VA. 78 local governments and consulting engineers in attendance.
February 11, 2004	Virginia Independent Insurance Agents Association Annual Legislative Conference, Richmond VA. 150 in attendance.
June 10, 2004	VAMLIS Conference, Norfolk, VA. 80 local and regional GIS experts in attendance.
June 16 – 18, 2004	Virginia Hazard Mitigation Summit, Charlottesville, VA. 120 in attendance.

## 5.2 State Review of Local Hazard Mitigation Plans

Training in review techniques to ensure that local §322 plan drafts meet all required elements of the DMA 2000 legislation was provided by the URS HMTAP project and FEMA Region III to staff of the Department of Emergency Management. VDEM staff provide crosswalk reviews prior to forwarding plans to FEMA Regional III staff for review. This review is conducted in accordance with the crosswalk procedures outlined in the *FEMA Multi-hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance Under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, March, 2004*. Every effort has been employed to provide consistency of review between state, FEMA and HMTAP contractors and to provide this review to DRU and local plan developers as quickly as possible. It remains the goal of the state to complete each plan review within 30 days.

## 5.3 State Support of Local Mitigation Projects

Most local hazard mitigation projects are funded through the disaster-related Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The Mitigation Administration Plan outlines the process used to solicit and select HMGP-funded projects. A copy of the current plan is provided in Appendix K, *Virginia Emergency Operations Plan*. Similar procedures are used for the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA) grants, but not within the context of a post-disaster recovery effort. FEMA allocated Pre-disaster Mitigation Grant program funds to the Commonwealth during FY2001, FY2002 and FY2003. Two competitive projects were awarded through the FY2004-2005 PDM Program (George Mason University DRU Plan and the City of Chesapeake Human-Caused Plan Annex) and one through the FY 2006 PDM Program (University of Virginia DRU Plan).

To provide clarification and consistency across programs, an Administration Plan has been developed that combines administrative management policies and procedures into a single Administration Plan. This Plan is provided as Appendix K.

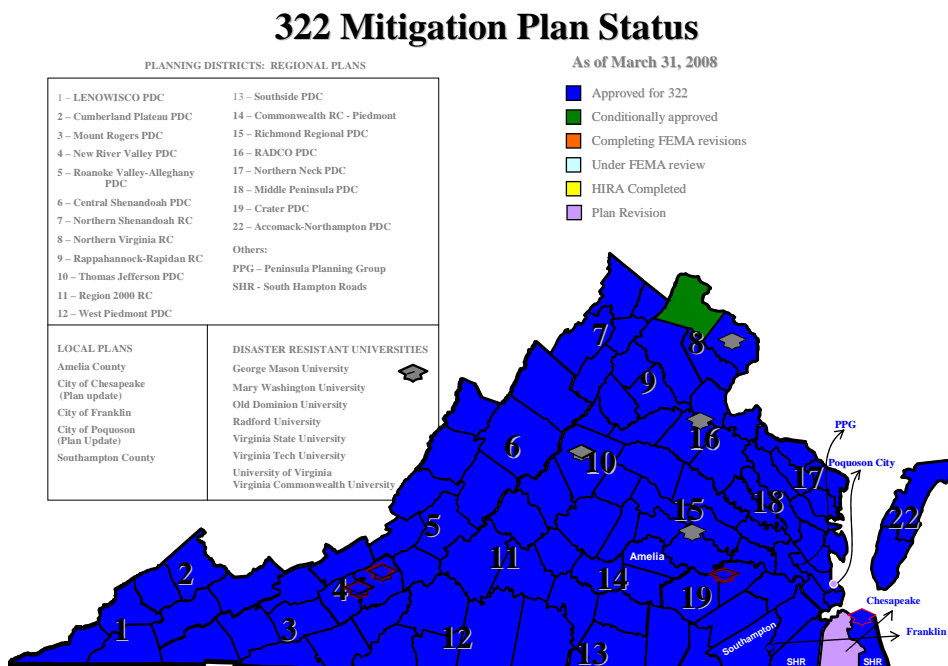
Figure 5-2 shows the status of DRU and local mitigation plan development as of October 2006. To date, the plans coordinated by the Southside Hampton Roads Group, Southampton County, the Cities of Chesapeake, Poquoson, and Franklin, the regional commissions of Rappahannock-Rapidan, and Region 2000, and the planning district commissions of Roanoke Valley-Alleghany, LENOWISCO, Cumberland Plateau, Mount Rogers, Central Shenandoah, Middle Peninsula, CRATER, Peninsula, Thomas Jefferson, West Piedmont, Richmond Regional, New River, Northern Neck, RADCO (with the exception of one county which is yet to be approved) and the Commonwealth Regional Council have been fully approved by FEMA. Four other plans have obtained conditional approval status, and one is currently under FEMA review. By late Fall, 2007, all plans





had been submitted to FEMA, conditionally approved and adopted by local governments with the exception of Loudoun County and some small towns and cities.

In addition to these twenty-seven local plans, there are eight Disaster Resistant University (DRU) plans at various stages of development. These are George Mason, Old Dominion, Radford, Virginia State, Virginia Tech, Virginia Commonwealth University and the Universities of Mary Washington and Virginia. The DRU planning and approval process is similar to that of local plan development and approval. VDEM mitigation staff work with the DRU plan contacts and contractors to ensure that these hazard mitigation plans are successfully developed and approved. They also continue to work with other Virginia universities to encourage DRU hazard mitigation planning. Figure 5.2 also illustrates the DRU plan status as of March, 2008.



**Figure 5-2 Local mitigation plan status, March 31, 2008**

With final adoption and approval of the 27 local and regional mitigation plans, VDEM Hazard Mitigation staff are shifting to a role to provide plan implementation support. A strategy has been developed to encourage three or four meetings each year of each local mitigation plan steering committee where plan implementation, funding, maintenance and revision can be discussed. Some of these meetings may occur through teleconferencing or a web-based format. VDEM planners will attend as many meetings as is practicable to provide a stable technical resource. In addition, VDEM will institute a monthly call-down system to call each local plan sponsor to monitor status. Special emphasis will be placed on incorporation of hazard mitigation goals and objectives, particularly those related to land use and zoning, into city, county and town comprehensive plans as these are renewed. Finally, an annual report template is under development that will be distributed to each plan sponsor to ensure that annual progress is measured and celebrated. The annual reporting system will facilitate the initial steps of plan review and revision.

A interactive Hazard Mitigation Tool Kit was developed by VDEM hazard mitigation planning staff and distributed to each of the 27 local and regional plan sponsors during

the fall of 2007 and the winter of 2008. This tool kit facilitates plan implementation reporting and strategies to revise the plans as required by the CFR. Funding for plan revision will be prioritized based on plan expiration date and relative severity of flood hazards as indicated by repetitive loss and severe repetitive loss property lists, the HIRA Flood Vulnerability Analysis and revised *Flood Insurance Studies* and FIRMs. Communities with repetitive and severe repetitive flood loss properties will be targeted for funding through RFC, SRL, PDM, and HMGP for structural mitigation projects as described in Strategy 1.2.4.

The Commonwealth has been supportive of development of Flood Mitigation Plans to support eligibility of Flood Mitigation Assistance grant projects for more than ten years. With the inception of all-hazard mitigation planning, many local and regional §322 plans were cross-walked and approved to meet FMA plan standards per §78.5 of *44 Code of Federal Regulations- Flood Mitigation Plan Development*. In fact, FY2008 funds have been requested through submittal of a FMA planning project to extend the approved Middle Peninsula Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to meet §78.5 requirements which includes identifying repetitive flood loss properties..

Virginia communities with approved Flood Mitigation Assistance Plans are shown below in Figure 5.3.

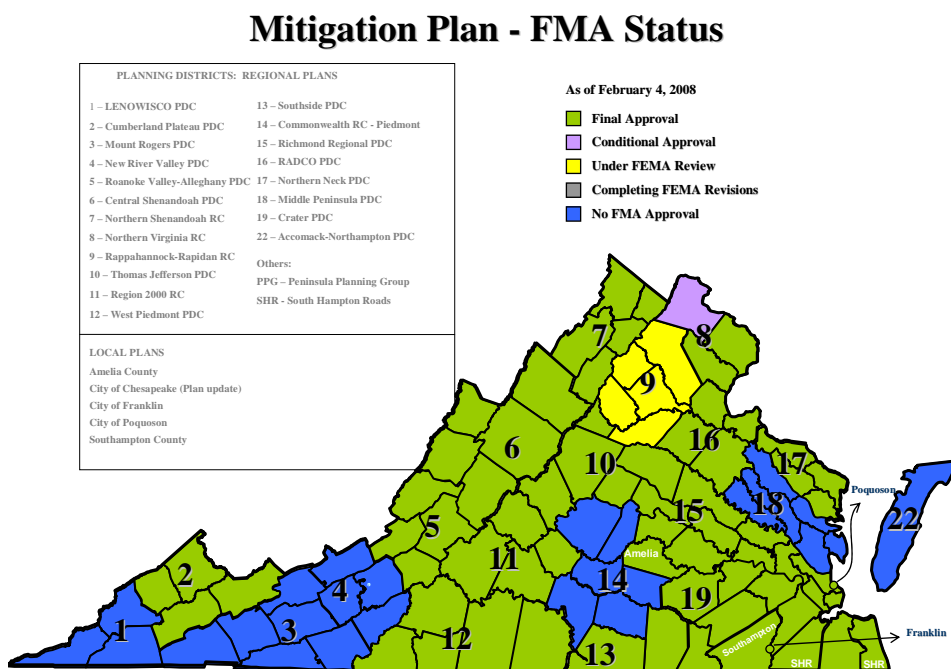


Figure 5-3 Local Flood Mitigation Assistance Plan status, February 4, 2008

## 5.4 Incorporating Local Mitigation Plan Results into The State Plan

As discussed in section 2.1 of Chapter 2, the Department of Emergency Management Mitigation staff are in the process of incorporating all remaining relevant local data sets from the approved local plans into a comprehensive statewide database. The objective is to integrate local risk analysis data along with mitigation strategies and goals into the

State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Data that has already been extracted from the FEMA approved hazard mitigation plans include:

- Final plan approval dates
- List of prioritized mitigation strategies
- Project types
- Identified funding sources
- Estimated project timeframes, and
- The status of identified mitigation projects

This effort will result in the capability to provide more comprehensive HIRAs for upcoming plan revisions as well as to provide a basis for HMGP applications resulting from a disaster declaration. The Local and Regional Mitigation Plan Strategies Database has been created with more than 5,500 records that reflect the strategies of local plans. This database is used to inform the funding process whereby points are given in the mitigation review process to projects that are listed and prioritized in local all-hazard mitigation plans. A section of the database may be found displayed in Enhanced Appendix 11.

As described in Chapters I and 3, the local plan HIRA information from several local and regional plans has been uploaded into the state hazard mitigation database. This effort will continue as funds are available from HMGP 7% “planning project” funding. Special emphasis has been placed on localized hazard history and listing of vulnerable critical facilities that are not state-owned properties.

